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FREE WILL

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FREEHOLDERS.

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L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year, M,DCC,LIII



FREE WILL

TO

FREEHOLDERS.

THE Clergy of all Denominations, from the Canting Swadler, to the P——e, are Enemies to the Liberties of the Laity; for as the Power of the Clergy encreases, the Liberty of the Laity diminishes, and as the power of the Clergy diminishes, the Power and Freedom of the Laity encreases. The Consequence from hence is plain; that power in the Clergy, and Freedom and Liberty in the Laity can never exist together. To give instances of this would fill up many Folios; but I shall only hint to the Reader a few of them. In *Italy, Spain, and Portugal*, where the Clergy govern, the Laity are as absolute Slaves, as if they had been bought at *Guinea*, and are only Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water for the Clergy. In *Holland, Switzerland, and Venice*, the Clergy have little power, and the Laity are therefore free and have power. In *France*, the Clergy have less power than in *Italy, Spain, or Portugal*; the consequence is the Laity there have more Freedom than the Laity of *Rome, Spain, or Portugal*. In *England* the Clergy have less power than in *France*, and the Laity enjoy more Freedom and power in *England*, than in *France*: from all which the Conclusion is very natural, that power in the Clergy, is very destructive to the Liberty and power of the Laity.

As no Lay-Man in his Senses can contradict the above Principles, is it not the Interest and advantage, nay the duty of every Lay-Man, to oppose the Clergy's getti-



too much Power? for be assured, the instant the Clergy have got power, they will not fail to exercise it vigorously against the Laity. Half a Nation had better have their Throats cut, than that the whole should lose its Liberty; for what is a Man, who is not Free? is he not a Slave? A Name much worse than Beasts. Does not Man part with his Characteristick, when he parts with his Freedom? Does he not lay violent Hands upon himself, when he gives up his Freedom? Does he not injure himself, his Children, Grand-Children, and all his Posterity to the End of Time? has he not ungratefully forgot the Memory of those, who, at the expence of their Lives and Fortunes, for his sake have stood up for his Freedom? and will any Man at this day, peaceably with his own Voic give up what his Father, or Grand Father, purchased for him, at the expence of their Lives and Ruin of many of their Fortunes. O my Countrymen! if you regard your Lives, your Estates, your Properties, and above all your Freedom, exercise that power, which the Laws of your Country have distinguished you with, from the Laws of other Actions Countries; you live in a Country where the Prince and lowest Subject are pin'd down to square their Actions, by the Rule of Law: no Law can be made without your Consent: The Members of Parliament are chosen, if they deceive you, or by one single Vote undoe you for ever. You have Timely and full Notice; one of your Candidares is avowedly espoused to the Clergy, and his Ancestors were the same, he seeks their Interests and Courts the Friendship of Enemies to your Freedom. Is not this a Fact, and as well known as that *Tottenham*, (when the present Lord *Li——nt* was here before) saved by his single Vote our Country from Ruin. If he be is sent by you to Parliament, will not the Clergy claim the Merit of his Election, and as he has courted, and does solicit their Interest, how can you imagine he will not be their Tool, their Dupe. Suppose another question should be put this very next Session, wherein the Trade of this poor Nation might be hazarded, nay ruined for every; what probably will happen, how, think you, will he give his Vote? surely to those whom he has Courted, and who act privately for him, and are unwilling at present to

pull off the Mask. My dearest Countrymen, will you then blame for for own, and your Children's Ruin? it will be too late to say if I had inspecsee he would have voted in so wicked a Manner, I would not have given my Voice, nor consented that he should be sent to parliament, it will be then too late to go to your landlord with a complaint against himself, for recommending to you a Man that has thus betrayed you, and perhaps your Landlord will tell you. you had your Freedom to vote as you pleased, and you are only to blame yourself. The Landlord perhaps has considered you as his Property, looked upon you in no other Light than his abject Slave, and in Return for your Vote has got a Pension, or some ecclesiastical Preferment; this will stop his mouth for the present; but alas! you poor miserable Freeholder. you have lost your Freedom, and, as far as in your Power, you have entailed Slavery and Misery on your innocent Posterity; your Voice perhaps may never be asked again in the glorious Cause of Liberty, and you have got nothing for all the Calamity which may befall you and your Children's Children, but Sorrow and fruitless Repentance. But perhaps it will be said, how can a your Freeholder pretend, to vote against his Landlord, or the Recommendation of his Landlord, who is supposed to be better acquainted with the Interest of his Country, and to have the greatest regard for the welfare of it, as he may be the greatest Loser by any thing that may be attempted against it? Landlords of great wealth and property may be corrupt, and be corrupted; you have my Friend, already an Instance of this, and a very notorious one, Landlords will certainly get whatever is to be gotten, whether of Honour or Profit, but you have nothing to get, nor to expect; you may lose your Trade, but above all you must lose your very birthright your Freedom, than which you had better part with your Life, But you may say, why should I suspect Mr. B.—we will be directed by the Clergy? If you are not blind, my Friend, you must see it; are they not all for him throughout the whole Kingdom? is not the chief of them his Adviser and Director, or is he not advised or directed by a Person who is advised or directed by him? and pray what is the difference?—

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You may also say, why should it be suspected that the Clergy, or their Chief, should have any Designs against the Interest of this already insatuated poor Country? Whenever you behold a Clergyman going out of the duty of his Office; and looking after temporal Power, beware of him, he does not mean well to you; can you imagine it is on Account of rendering you or your Country any Service, that he neglects the great Duty of his Office; which is a Crime of the deepest and foulest nature. Whenever you behold a Foreigner at the Height of Power, profusely squandering away his annual Income, in entertaining the great People of this Nation, you may justly suspect he means to court their Friendship and Interest in the respective counties, to which they belong, and to gain them over to his ambitious designs. Whenever you perceive a Man grasping at the whole and sole Disposal of all preferments in a nation, you may justly suspect he has some lurking design, which has not as yet appeared. When you see a Man at the Top of Power, who has no Fortune nor Family to attach him to the Interest of one country, preferable to another, be vigilant against such a Parson; when you see a Man in Fullness of power, in so short a time as a single Sessions, exercise it in the disapointing of two most useful and beneficial bills for the benefit of this nation and of the Laity, suspect such a man that he does not mean well to you; when you see such a man joining with a rich Layman to ruin a poor Tenant, and his whole Family, put not too much credit in such a man; when you hear of the designs of such a man against the Linnen bill, and the Linnen Manufacture of this Nation, join not, my Friend, with him, nor with them who join with him. When you see such a man govern and lead all assemblies, councils, &c. and even one branch of your Legislature, sleep not, for the Thief is about your House; when you see such a man making large strides towards power, in another branch of your Legislature, and bestowing all Preferments to the accomplishing thereof, think your Liberties and Freedom are in the most imminent danger, and consider that this man is neglecting his Office and Duty therein, for the executing of which, he has an Allowance equal to

to some of the *German* Princes. If a Foreigner has a minde to destroy a country he must not expect to gain power to enable him to accomplish his designs by Penury, or close and retired living, or by neglecting to court the Friendship and Interest of the men of Fortune in the country; he must live publickly and hospitably; he must have crouds about him; he must give Preferments to some, and make large premises to all; he must not appear what he is; he must be affable and courteous to every one; he must be grave with a Judge, solemn with a Bishop, affect Wit with a Poet, play Tennis with Boys, talk of the *Curragh* Races with Sir *Edward*, play at Picquet with my Lord, and so forth; whenever, Brether Freeholder, you see a man at the Pinnacle of Power, neglecting the Duty of his Office, and doing all these Things—consider that it's only in such a Man's Power to ruin a Country, and by such Men only have Countries been ruined and more especiall when such a man happens to be a Foreigner, to pawn as a Pledge with the Publick as a Security that he means no Harm thereto.

I have seen svsome Panegyricks and scurrilous Libels wrote both of Mr. B——we and Mr. C——d; neither of these Gentlemen can I put in Comparison with the Happiness and welldo of my country; no Person that is acquainted with either, but must acknowledge that the are both intitled to the Honour they are looking after; but, Brother Freeholder, consider what Principles they set up upon; the one sets upon the Freedom in the Electors; the other upon the Power of the Church, and the Recommendation of the Landlords, who do not even reside in this Kingdom, and who are no otherways acquainted with you or your Interest, but by the Interposition of their Agents. With what Propriety can a Landlord expect his Freedom preserved to himself, who will endeavour to take it from his Tenants? Besides how are those foregoing Recommendations obtained? Brother Freeholder, I will inform you; they are obtained by foreign Attachments, which are very indifferent about what comes of us, whether We have Trade or not, or whether we are Slaves or free, and ten thousand to one would rejoice if we had

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Let me therefore, Brother Freeholder, Earnestly request of you to consider seriously, without the Influence of your Absent Landlords (who were they upon the spot would never resent your making use of your Free Will upon this Occasion) of what importance your Vote is at this present Time; that so far as a Vote can go, you have preserved your Country's Freedom; consider that one Vote must have two to overbalance it, and as *Tottenham's* Vote saved the Liberties of *Ireland* for twenty one Years, perhaps your single Voice may save it too even. Be not intimidated by Agents, who attempt to frighten you with the displeasure of their Employers; remember the glorious Stand you made for Liberty in the Year 1739, in favour of Mr. *Richardson*, in opposition to all the Landlords of this Country. The Fame of your Spirits and Freedom Echoed your Praises all over this Kingdom, nay your Example was recommended to every County and Borough in this Nation; and will you soon forget what made your Fathers and some of yourselves so famous? what Landlord then resented the Behaviour of his Tenant? no, they were proud of it and compared you to the Free *English* Tenants. Mr. *Richardson* cannot be angry with you, it was the glorious Spirit of Freedom which powerfully infused itself into your Minds, that conferred on him the Honour he now enjoys; and he I am convinced must be ashamed to resent your Exercising the same Liberty by which he has received so much Credit; consider it was not his Fortune that swayed you, he was opposed by a young Gentleman of much larger Fortune, and of great Worth; it was the Principles he espoused, the Freedom of Electors, and an Opposition to the Power of the Clergy, that gained you over to him. If you shewed so noble a Spirit in the Days of less Danger, what Spirit ought you to shew when the Danger is greater; when Attempts are made to destroy your Linnen Trade; when Bills calculated for the Advantage of the Nation are smothered in Councils, and when a Man, thus grasping at Power, joins with a Man of large Fortune to ruin the private Family of a poor Tenant; what can the Nation expect? Mr. *Richardson* surely will be a Mediator for you with your Landlord,

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He will plead for you; certainly he has not forgot the Speeches he made in 1739. Do not let the terrible Face of an Agent frighten you; be assured no *English* Landlord will ever be angry with his *Irish* Tenant, for acting as his Tenant in *England* does. Do not suffer yourselves to be enslaved by your own Voice, give it with the Freedom the Law of your Country has settled upon you, by which you will obtain immortal Praise, and leave to your Children entire, what your Fathers were for many Years gaining by Piece-meal.

Brother Freeholder, as I am a Well-wisher to the Nation in general, and to this Country in particular, I thought it my indispensable Duty to lay before you, in as few Words as I could, and with Integrity of Mind, the Danger that is now before you, to caution you with the Sincerity of a Friend against betraying yourself, and to prevent your parting with your own and your Children's Birth-right, and, while you set up for a free Agent, act conformable to the Dictates of your Conscience, and to what God made you.

C—S L—S.

